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Ancient Times

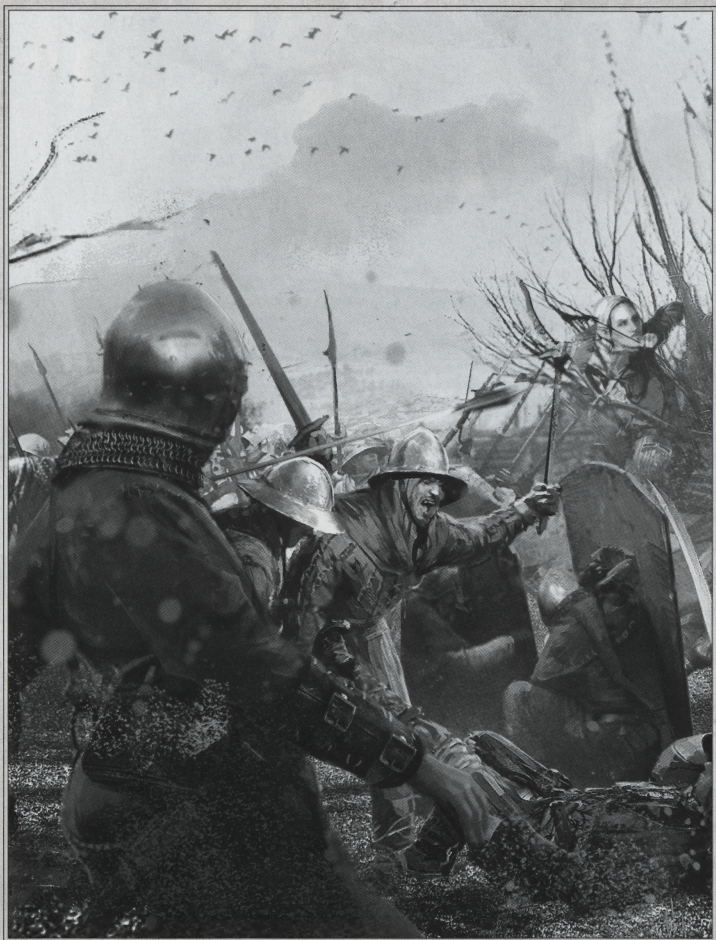
Ages ago, this world was dominated by nonhuman races – the gnomes and the dwarves. Then the elves appeared – the proud people of Aen Seidhe, who arrived in this world twenty-five centuries ago. As they built up settlements, fortresses, and cities, these Elder Races created this world's first kingdoms and civilizations.

The magical cataclysm known as the Conjunction of the Spheres changed everything. For a time, it shattered the boundaries between worlds, allowing new beings and phenomena to cross over. Though fifteen centuries have since passed, traces of that event can still be found in our world. It was then that magic entered the world, along with the mon-



sters that plague it to this day. The Conjunction also brought the first humans into this world, with their arrival marking the beginning of a new era.

At first the humans were nothing more than refugees and intruders, completely lost in their new and harsh environment. Faced with unknown dangers, they had to fight every day for their very survival. The last five hundred years, however, have seen a rapid expansion of that young, ambitious race. Slowly but surely, humans transformed from refugees to conquerors, seizing most of the known lands from the Elder Races with fire and steel.



The Races and Peoples of the Continent

Today the world is inhabited by multiple races and cultures, but for the last five centuries humans have formed an absolute majority. In the North, their lands are divided among numerous proud, warlike kingdoms, which have fought incessantly amongst each other and against their larger southern neighbor, the powerful Nilfgaardian Empire. After conquering its smaller neighbors, this rising empire in the past few decades has begun a steady march to the north, constantly seeking to expand its borders. Nilfgaard and the Northern Kingdoms have already fought two major wars, but it is the present war, the Third Northern War, that according to many will finally decide the fate of this world.

The time of the other races has passed. Elves, dwarves, and other species have been forced to coexist with humans in a human-dominated world, which usually means facing discrimination, ostracism, and life in ghettos. Racial prejudice, intolerance, and hatred are their daily bread. Those non-humans who would not accept this were forced to fall back to remote forests and mountains. Pushed to the very edges of the world, to their last independent enclaves, they fight a guerrilla war to retain the final shreds of their dignity, and the numerous atrocities committed by both sides only serve to make the rift between humans and nonhumans ever deeper.



◆ Vesemir

The Witchers, Their Training and Role in Society

The witcher caste came into existence a few centuries ago. Created through magical experimentation and controlled mutations, the witchers were humanity's answer to the constant threat posed by the monsters and magical beasts which have plagued this world since the Conjunction. For years they have roamed the land as professional monster hunters, taking money in exchange for exterminating dangerous creatures that threaten humans. However, the prejudice and wild rumors surrounding this trade have also made witchers the targets of persecution and outright hatred. At various times, they have been hunted down or lynched by frenzied mobs, and their schools



◆ School of the Wolf



◆ School of the Viper



◆ School of the Griffin



◆ School of the Cat

plundered and burnt to the ground. Although the time of open hostility has ended, witchers are still widely distrusted and ostracized. Despite all this, and though they are now few in number, the last of the witchers still ply their trade, striving to remain neutral in the face of the wars and discord ravaging this world.

Witchers are trained from childhood. Their bodies age much more slowly than those of ordinary humans, are immune to diseases, and can shrug off almost any poison. Witchers can also see in darkness and, thanks to the many modifications to their metabolism, are able to regulate the speed of their pulse and the flow of adrenaline, giving them unparalleled reflexes and strength. During their gruelling training, witchers learn both to master the sword and to use simple, yet highly effective magic. They also have a great knowledge of monsters, lifting curses, and dispelling charms, which allows them to more effectively face the magical beings they are hired to deal with.

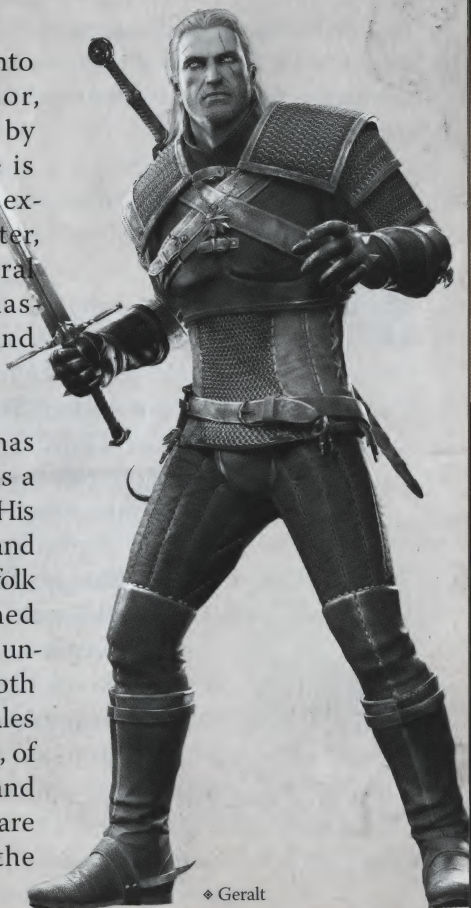
The Best of the Best – Geralt of Rivia

Raised and trained at the mountain keep of Kaer Morhen, the seat of the Wolf School of witchers, Geralt of Rivia is one of the last and most experienced practitioners of the witchers' trade. He has been traveling this world for several decades, accepting commissions to track down dangerous monsters and exterminate them with steel and silver. His white hair is not a mark of advanced age, but the price his body paid for several additional, experimental mutations which Geralt underwent during his training. These unique alter-



ations have made him into a near-perfect warrior, whose skill is matched by only a limited few. He is a calm, composed, and exceptionally deadly fighter, possessed of supernatural speed and agility, a master of both swordplay and witcher magic.

Over the years, Geralt has also built a reputation as a consummate professional. His services are in high demand both among the common folk as well as among crowned heads, since every task he undertakes is completed both swiftly and effectively. Tales of the White Wolf's deeds, of the curses he has lifted and the beasts he has killed, are known all throughout the Northern Kingdoms.



◆ Geralt

Geralt's Friends and Loved Ones

Despite being a loner by nature, during his travels Geralt of Rivia has gained many devoted friends who, when the need has arisen, have never hesitated to come to his aid. These, among others, include:



Dandelion - The famous troubadour and poet, whose ballads are known almost as widely as his amorous conquests. Dandelion's temperament and lightheartedness, combined with his biting tongue, have often landed both him and Geralt in trouble. But one cannot deny that Dandelion is a devoted and loyal friend who has always been willing to risk his own neck for Geralt and his companions.



Zoltan Chivay - A cordial, somewhat ribald dwarf and Geralt's friend, serving him with sound advice as well as a strong arm. This veteran of the wars against Nilfgaard now leads the life of an adventurer and is, in his own words, "an incorrigible altruist, who, so as not to dissipate his efforts to promote good, is content to carry out very specific good deeds – those that are good for himself and his immediate surroundings."



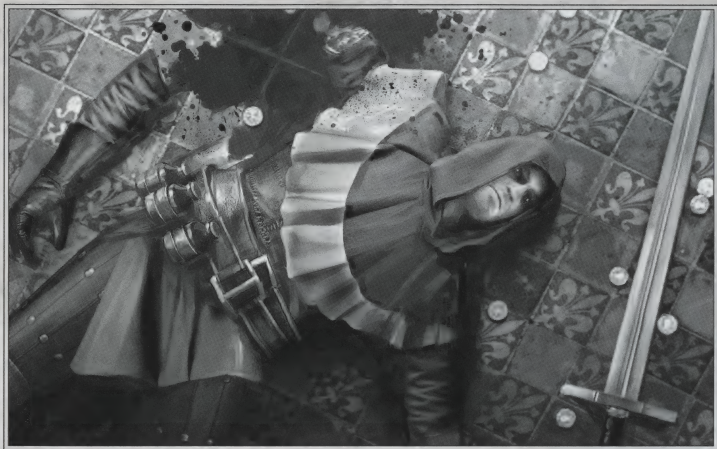
Triss Merigold - This young sorceress was at first Geralt's companion and friend, and later his lover. Since that time, their relationship has grown ever deeper. Beyond the feelings between them, Triss Merigold has also proven her courage and decisiveness, as well as her incredible mastery of magic, on countless occasions.



Yennefer - The first and greatest love of Geralt of Rivia. This powerful sorceress also served as a mentor and foster mother to Ciri, the witcher's ward. Yennefer's fate has remained unknown ever since Geralt was separated from her in mysterious circumstances several years ago.



Ciri - The witcher's ward and adopted daughter. She has been connected to Geralt through the hidden workings of Fate and Destiny. The twists of Fate have separated and reunited Geralt and Ciri several times over the years, and Geralt continues to search for the girl to this day. Because of her unique magical abilities, she has also been sought for many years by both the Nilfgaardian Empire and other, enigmatic forces that would use her special gift for their own ends.



The Witcher's Previous Deeds

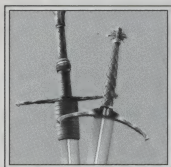
Several years after his presumed death, Geralt of Rivia makes an unexpected return, pursued by the riders of the legendary Wild Hunt. Still trying to regain his lost memory, he becomes embroiled in world events as he seeks to unravel his past and discover what has become of his loved ones. Maintaining the neutrality typical of witchers becomes nearly impossible, as Fate stubbornly forces Geralt to get involved in criminal wars, rebel plots, and the political intrigues of kings. After saving King Foltest of Temeria from an assassination attempt, the witcher is promised help in his search for the missing Ciri and Yennefer. However, not long after, Foltest is killed by an-

other assassin, and Geralt must flee, as he is falsely accused of the deed. In reality, the assassins are acting on behalf of the Nilfgaardian Empire, which secretly uses witchers from the old Viper School to dispose of one Northern king after another. Geralt finally manages to regain his memory and partially clear his name, but the Northern Kingdoms, ravaged by political chaos and nonhuman uprisings, cannot hold their ground against the Empire's invading armies. Yet another great war begins, one that will ultimately decide the fate of the North. Freed from his political entanglements, the witcher now travels through wild lands, great cities, and plundered realms in search of his lost loved ones, with each step bringing him closer to facing the mysterious Wild Hunt.



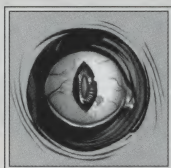
◆ Letho

Gameplay



Steel and Silver – Geralt's Swords

In battle, Geralt uses one or the other of his pair of witcher swords. The steel sword is useful against humans and wild animals, while his enchanted silver blade is lethal to all manner of magical beasts and monsters.



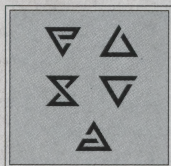
Witcher Senses

Geralt's senses, like those of all witchers, are exceedingly keen, enhanced with special mutations and honed through years of training. He can feel, hear, and see things that a normal human would not notice. This allows him to track the beasts he hunts all the more effectively and avoid potentially deadly ambushes.



Geralt's Medallion

Geralt wears a silver medallion in the shape of a wolf's head – the symbol of the Wolf School of witchers in which he was trained. The medallion is more than a simple insignia of his trade, for it possesses many useful abilities of its own. It vibrates when danger is near, and can also detect magic, creatures born of it, and the presence of various supernatural beasts.



Signs – Witcher Magic

Witchers utilize magic known as Signs. These simple spells give them an additional edge in battle, and using them at the right moment may well change the outcome of a fight. One gesture is enough for a witcher to hurl his foe several yards back, knock him down, set him ablaze, blind him or stun him. Other Signs are more subtle but no less effective, and can be used to create magical traps, charm enemies, or protect the witcher from blows.



Witcher Alchemy

Witchers are trained in the art of preparing magical potions from rare herbs and the organs of defeated monsters. Consuming these mixtures, which are typically lethal to normal humans, enhances a witcher's already formidable abilities, granting him supernatural speed and combat prowess. Other ingredients can be used to prepare poisons or bombs that can be used to stun or weaken enemies.

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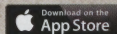
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